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- a) providing a database including reservation information for a plurality of recreational facilities, said database further including selection information, said selection information including a time and a date for an activity at at least one of said recreational facilities;
- b) providing a plurality of said participants with simultaneous access to said reservation information and said selection information;
- c) upon receiving a request from a first one of said participants, retrieving and transmitting to said first participant selection information pertaining to at least one available reservation;
- d) receiving a selection from said first participant from said selection information in c);
- e) receiving indication information from said first participant, said indication information including information necessary to notify at least one other participant of said selection; and
- f) communicating said selection to said at least one other participant.

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected all of the claims of the present application under 35 USC 103. Specifically, independent claims 1, 17 and 18 have been rejected under 35 USC 103 in view of Davies et al. and Zhang et al. Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 USC 103 in view of Davies et al. and Zhang et al., and further in view of the Pastin article.

By the present amendment, originally filed claims 1, 2, 17 and 18 have been amended, and new claim 21 has been added. No new matter is believed to have been added. Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested.

The present invention simplifies the reservation process at recreational facilities by allowing multiple users to simultaneously access reservation information for multiple facilities. Once a user has reviewed available reservations, he or she may select a reservation and proceed to notify potential event partners. The user can notify known partners through their e-mail addresses, or the user can select a profile element to notify unknown parties sharing some commonality. The user is thus provided with a wealth of options for selecting a facility and partners for an event.

The present invention presents the user with the opportunity to select available reservations from a menu of all available reservations, which increases the likelihood that the user will obtain, keep and pay for the reservation. The present invention also presents the user with the opportunity to notify potential participants at the time of the reservation, which increases the likelihood that the recreational facility will maximize the number of participants for the event time slot. Historically, as an example, recreational facilities such as golf courses have lost revenues when a person reserves a time slot for a foursome, and then fewer than four players show up to pay for and play the round of golf. Thus, the present invention benefits both the user seeking the reservation, as well as the recreational facility seeking to maximize profitability.

By the present Amendment, claim 1 has been amended to recite that profile information for a plurality of participants is provided in the database, wherein the profile information includes at least one element. Claim 1 has further been amended to recite that the first participant selects an element corresponding to an element of the profile information of at least one additional participant, and that the invention determines a subset of participants having the selected profile information. In this way, as an example, the invention can allow the user to notify participants who might share a

common interest with the first participant. Support for this amendment can be found, for example, on pages 7 and 8 of the specification, as well as in Figs. 2 and 3 of the drawings. It is submitted that neither the Davies et al. nor the Zhang et al. reference, taken either singly or in combination together or with any other cited reference, contemplates such a method.

By the present Amendment, claim 2 has also been amended so as to state that the element selected by the first participant is taken from the group of elements consisting of: a hobby, an occupation, an age range, a gender and an income level. Support for this amendment is similarly found, for example, on pages 7 and 8 of the specification and in Figs. 2 and 3 of the drawings. It is submitted that neither the Davies et al. nor the Zhang et al. reference, taken either singly or in combination together or with any other cited reference, contemplates such a method.

Additionally, by the present Amendment, claims 17 and 18 have been amended to recite that the present invention provides to the participants simultaneous access to reservation information for a plurality of recreational facilities, and receives a participant's selection from said reservation information. New claim 21 includes similar language and further includes language whereby, upon receiving a user request, the present invention will retrieve and transmit to the user selection information corresponding to available reservations. Support for such language can be found, for example, on pages 4 through 7 of the specification and in Fig. 1 of the drawings. It is submitted that neither the Davies et al. nor the Zhang et al. reference, taken either singly or in combination together or with any other cited reference, contemplates such a method or system.

For a prior art reference to obviate a claimed invention, the reference must suggest or teach the claimed invention. The Davies et al. reference relates to a device which can connect to a single golf course's phone reservation system using a single line telephone (see Fig. 1, col. 3, lines 33-39). The purpose of the Davies et al. device is to replace the user having to call a golf course's phone reservation system by functioning "hands free" and "unattended" when performing the dedicated task (see col. 2 lines 58-61). The Davies et al. device is only capable of accessing a single golf course's reservation system at a time. No choices are provided to the user of the Davies et al. device; rather, the user blindly submits his or her desired preferences (see column 4, lines 20-40). There is thus no teaching of an active selection by the user from available reservation options in Davies et al. There is further no teaching of an active selection by the user of a criteria for automatically notifying potential partners after the reservation is made. Even further, there is no teaching of receiving a user request for available reservation information, transmitting the available reservation information to the user, and subsequently receiving the user's selection from the available reservation information. Thus, the Davies et al. reference teaches away from active user selection of available reservation times and partner participants, as claimed in the present application.

The Zhang et al. reference cited by the Examiner relates to a group scheduling software system designed to adapt to the operating environment of the recipient user. The Zhang et al. reference is designed to facilitate scheduling and calendaring of appointments for known users. The Zhang reference uses e-mail addresses contained in the user's own address book in connection with inviting such additional known users to a scheduled event. However, the Zhang et al. reference does not teach the method of allowing a user to seek additional participants to an

established reservation through a search of a central database based on a profile element. It is thus Applicant's position that the Zhang et al. reference, taken singly or in combination with the Davies et al. reference, does not teach or suggest the system and method of the present invention as claimed in the present amendment.

On page 11 of the Office Action, the Examiner has cited the Pastin article as a basis for pairing players according to their handicaps. The Pastin article refers to tournament operators who can pair up golfers with similar handicaps. The operators, and not the users, thus create foursomes based on a pre-established field. This is entirely different from a system and method as claimed in the presently amended application whereby users can select the desired criteria upon which they can match up with other participants. There is thus no teaching in the Pastin article or any of the other cited references to a system which allows a user initiating a reservation to systematically contact other registered users who may have a particular profile registered which allows them to be contacted based on their profile element.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that the claims as amended are not made obvious by Davies et al., Zhang et al., or the Pastin article, taken singly or in combination, and are allowable over the cited references. The remaining claims are dependent upon one of the amended independent claims and it is submitted that these dependent claims are similarly allowable over the cited references.

In view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks which follow, applicant submits that all of the claims of the present application are not anticipated or obviated by the cited references,

taken singly or in combination, and are therefore allowable over the prior art of record. An early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Applicant hereby submits \$42 to cover the cost of the newly added independent claim. A petition for extension of time, along with the required fee, and a change of correspondence address are being filed simultaneously with this Amendment. Marked up versions of the claims as amended herein are also attached.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas F. Bergert".

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Attached: Petition for extension of time
Change of correspondence address
Marked up version of amended claims

Filed: March 7, 2003



IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of

Bergert, Thomas F.

Serial No.: 09/473,136

Examiner: A. Kalinowski

Filed: December 28, 1999

Art Unit: 3626

For: Recreational Outing
Reservation System

Assistant Commissioner for Patents
Washington, D.C. 20231

Marked up version of Amended Claims to
Accompany Amendment of March 7, 2003

This is a submission of the marked-up versions of the amended claims in Applicant's amendment of this same date.

The amendments to claims 1, 2, 17 and 18 are shown as follows:

1. (amended) A method of arranging a recreational outing for participants, [implemented by a server application,] comprising the steps of:

a) providing a database of information including reservation information, said reservation information including at least one selection option, said option including a time and a date for an activity from at least one recreational facility, said database further including profile information for a plurality of said participants, said profile information for each of said plurality of participants including at least one element;

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b) receiving a selection from a first one of said participants [using a client application] of a selection option;

c) receiving indication information including a selection from said first participant of at least one element corresponding to an element of said profile information of at least one additional participant [from said first participant using a client application, said indication information including information necessary for said server application to notify at least one other participant of said selection];

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d) determining a subset of said participants from said database of participants having said profile element; and

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e) [d)] communicating said selection to said [at least one other participant] subset of participants.

2. (amended) The method of claim 1 wherein [said database includes profile information for at least one of said participants, said profile information including at least one element, and wherein said indication information includes at least one selected element of said profile information whereby said server application can notify each participant having said selected element in said participant's profile] said element is an element taken from the group of elements consisting of: a hobby, an occupation, an age range, a gender, an income level.

17. (amended) A computer system for arranging a recreational [golf] outing for a plurality of participants, comprising:

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a network to which a first one of said participants and at least one other participant have

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access and across which said provider and said participants can communicate information using respective client systems; and

a server application operable to communicate information across the network, said server application operable to:

provide simultaneous access to said participants to a database of information including reservation information related to a plurality of recreational facilities, said reservation information including at least one selection option, said option including a time and a date for an activity from at least one recreational facility;

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receive a selection from said first participant[s] using a client application of a selection option;

receive indication information from said first participant using a client application, said indication information including information necessary for said server application to notify said at least one other participant of said selection; and,

communicate said selection to said at least one other participant.

18. (amended) A computer system for arranging a recreational [golf] outing for a plurality of participants, [implemented by a server application,] comprising:

means for providing simultaneous access to [golf] reservation information for a plurality of recreational facilities to a plurality of participants;

means for a first participant to select a desired reservation from said reservation information for a plurality of recreational facilities;

means for said first participant to pre-populate a list of electronic mail addresses for at least one additional participant;

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means for notifying said list of an invitation to join said first participant at said desired reservation; and

means for said at least one additional participant from said list to confirm acceptance of said invitation to join.

Respectfully submitted,

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Filed: March 7, 2003